

The BOYS

Dear Becky



07

MATURE
DYNAMITE

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2020

The BOYS™

Dear Becky

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07

Billy Butcher, Wee Hughie, Mother's Milk, The Frenchman and The Female were The Boys: a CIA-backed team of very dangerous people, each one dedicated to the struggle against the most lethal force on Earth — superpower. Some superheroes had to be watched. Some of them had to be controlled. And some of them — sometimes — had to be taken out of the picture.

The issue was decided in one final battle against a massed superhero army, when a plan concocted by the “supes” to overthrow the US government went horribly awry. Now, twelve years later, Hughie and his lover Annie January have returned to his home in the Scottish town of Auchterladle — their battles fought and won, their torment over.

The days when Colonel Greg Mallory led The Boys are firmly in the past. So too are the times Billy Butcher shared with a woman who strove to send him down a different road. All of that is over and done with. Finished.

Now read on...

DYNAMITE

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THERE WAS A THING I
DONE I REMEMBERED THE
OTHER DAY. IT WAS A BIT
CRUEL, AND I DONE IT
JUST BECAUSE I COULD.

MALLORY SENT ME TO LONDON ON
A JOB. YOU WOULDN'T WANT THE
DETAILS, SO ALL I'LL SAY IS IF YOU
CALL YOURSELF CAPTAIN YOU WANT
TO WATCH WHAT YOU FOLLOW IT
WITH--SPECIALLY ROUND A BLOKE
THAT'S REALLY SERVED.

I DIDN'T GO
NOWHERE NEAR
THE OLD MANOR.
OR MY MUM.



OR WHERE
YOU'RE BURIED
EITHER, COME
TO THAT.

BILLY...?



BILLY, DO
YOU--DO YOU
REMEMBER
ME?

I--IT'S
BEEN AGES,
I--I KNOW YOU
WERE ILL, YOU
COULDN'T GO
TO THE--

CHRIST,
IT MUST HAVE
BEEN AWFUL
FOR YOU--!



ALL
RIGHT,
GUY.

BILLY,
I'M SO
SORRY...!



I KNEW WHAT HE WAS REALLY SORRY ABOUT. BUT IF ANYONE KNOWS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO KNOW THEY'LL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN, IT'S ME.

AND I MUST HAVE USED UP MY QUOTA OF HORRIBLE SHIT FOR THE DAY ON THE CAPTAIN, BECAUSE I SAID--YEAH, I'LL HAVE A QUICK ONE, MATE.

I'M SORRY, I FORGOT YOU DON'T DRINK, I HAD TO ASK THEM TO CHANGE IT...

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.



I WAS THINKING I OUGHT TO KEEP IT SHORT. TOO MANY REMINDERS OF BEING WITH YOU, AND I STILL WASN'T READY FOR THAT.

BUT I NEEDN'T HAVE WORRIED, BECAUSE EVEN TRYING TO CONSOLE ME, ALL GUY TALKED ABOUT WAS HIMSELF.



BY HIMSELF I MEAN THE SAME OLD BOLLOCKS. I HAD TO ASK HIM HOW SHEILA WAS DOING--GOD FORBID HIS GIRLFRIEND SHOULD GET A LOOK IN.

(UP THE DUFF. I DO NOT WANT TO THINK ABOUT THE BASKET CASE OF A KID THOSE TWO ARE GOING TO RAISE.)

AND I MEAN COME ON, JOHN MAJOR...?

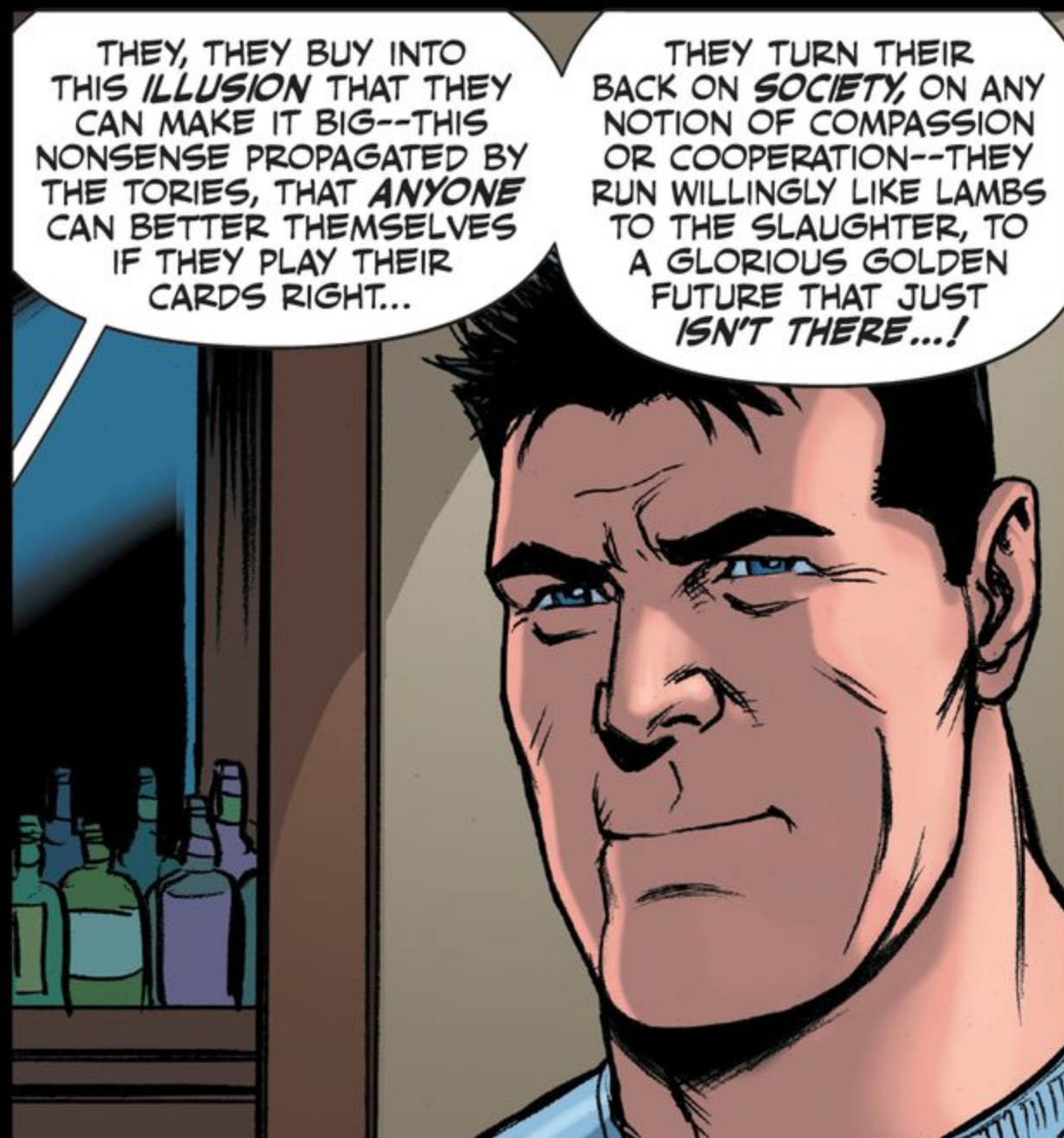


THATCHER WASN'T ENOUGH? **THREE TIMES?** PEOPLE HAVEN'T SUFFERED ENOUGH OF THIS **HEARTLESS CONSERVATIVE SHIT**, SO NOW WE'VE GOT TO HAVE THE WICKED WITCH'S HALFWIT APPRENTICE?

AND PEOPLE SAY WE HADN'T THE RIGHT CANDIDATE, THEY SAY THEY WENT OUT AND STOOD ON THE DOORSTEPS AND TALKED TO VOTERS, BUT I **KNOW** THE PROBLEM GOES DEEPER THAN THAT...



AND IT'S VERY SIMPLE:
THE WORKING CLASS PEOPLE
OF THIS COUNTRY CANNOT BE
CONVINCED TO STOP VOTING-
AGAINST-THEIR-OWN-
INTERESTS...



THEY, THEY BUY INTO
THIS *ILLUSION* THAT THEY
CAN MAKE IT BIG--THIS
NONSENSE PROPAGATED BY
THE TORIES, THAT *ANYONE*
CAN BETTER THEMSELVES
IF THEY PLAY THEIR
CARDS RIGHT...

THEY TURN THEIR
BACK ON *SOCIETY*, ON ANY
NOTION OF COMPASSION
OR COOPERATION--THEY
RUN WILLINGLY LIKE LAMBS
TO THE SLAUGHTER, TO
A GLORIOUS GOLDEN
FUTURE THAT JUST
ISN'T THERE...!



AND THEY
CAN'T SEE. IT'S
RIGHT IN FRONT OF
THEM BUT THEY
CAN'T SEE.

GUY.

AND
WE'RE *ALL*
GOING TO PAY
THE PRICE...

GUY.



OH GOD,
I'M SORRY,
I SHOULDN'T
BE TALKING
ABOUT--

YOU EVER
THINK THEY JUST
DON'T WANT ANY
OTHER CUNT
GETTIN' WHAT'S
THEIRS?



WHAT?

YOU WERE
ALWAYS LIKE THIS,
MATE. AN' IN TWENTY
OR THIRTY YEARS YOU'LL
HAVE ANOTHER FUCKIN'
POLITICAL DISASTER, AN'
YOU'LL BE SITTIN' HERE
SAYIN' EXACTLY THE
SAME THING.

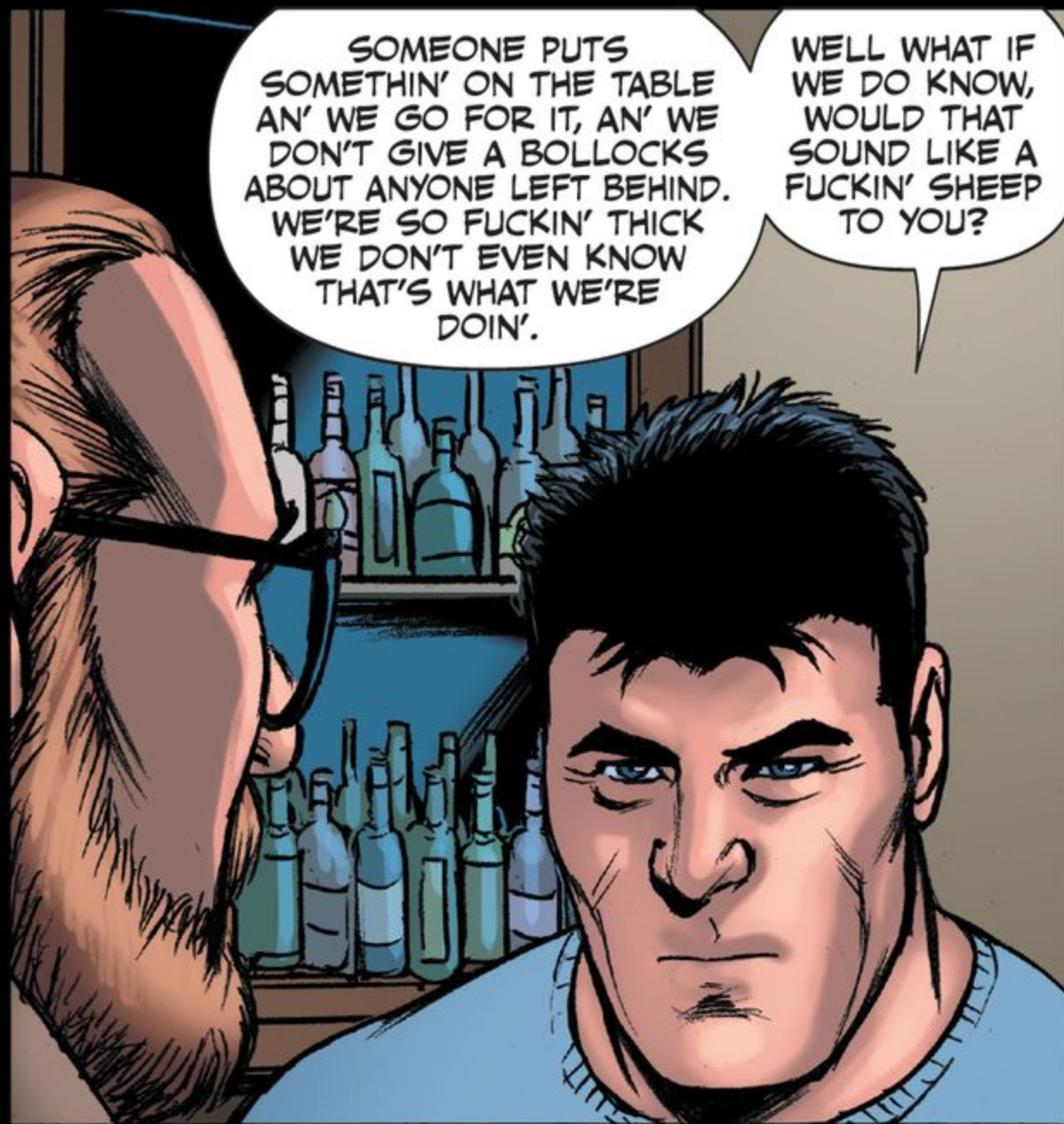
BLOKES LIKE
YOU GO ON ABOUT...
WORKIN' CLASS PEOPLE.
YOU AIN'T ONE O' THEM,
BUT YOU TALK LIKE YOU
UNDERSTAND THEM. YOU
SAY THEY'RE LIKE
SHEEP.





THAT'S THE LINE, INNIT? WE'RE LIKE SHEEP, 'COS WE'RE SO EASILY LED. THAT'S WHY WE GO FOR THIS SHIT.

BUT DID IT EVER OCCUR TO YOU THAT WE AIN'T?



SOMEONE PUTS SOMETHIN' ON THE TABLE AN' WE GO FOR IT, AN' WE DON'T GIVE A BOLLOCKS ABOUT ANYONE LEFT BEHIND. WE'RE SO FUCKIN' THICK WE DON'T EVEN KNOW THAT'S WHAT WE'RE DOIN'.

WELL WHAT IF WE DO KNOW, WOULD THAT SOUND LIKE A FUCKIN' SHEEP TO YOU?



WHAT IF WE AIN'T SHEEP?

WHAT IF WE'RE WOLVES?



THIS WAS IN THE DAYS I COULD SORT OF FEEL SOMETHING HAPPENING TO ME. SLOWLY, LIKE.

I KNEW WHAT IT WAS, SO I NEVER DID NOTHING TO STOP IT.



THIS...

THIS IS THE BILLY BUTCHER I NEVER KNEW, ISN'T IT?

YOU'RE A SMART LAD, GUY.

YOU'D'VE TWIGGED SOONER OR LATER.



THE WORST THING I EVER
DONE WAS TAKE THE STUFF
YOU SAID TO ME AND USE IT
TO MAKE MYSELF WORSE.

7: FRIDAY

BEFORE YOU
I WAS JUST
AN ANIMAL.

WITH YOU I MIGHT
HAVE BEEN WORTH
TALKING ABOUT.

BUT AFTERWARDS
I WAS SOMETHING
ELSE AGAIN.

ALL THE AGGRO, JUST
WANTING TO DO SOME
BASTARD IN--THAT CAME
BACK. BUT LIKE I SAY,
NOT LIKE BEFORE.

MORE PATIENT.
MORE WATCHING
AND WAITING.
THINKING.

I TOOK A FEW BITS OF
WHAT YOU WANTED ME
TO BE AND CHUCKED
THE REST AWAY.

LEAVE IT, BILLY--
THAT'S WHAT YOU
WOULD SAY.

COME ON, IT
ISN'T WORTH IT.

WELL, THERE IS
SOMETHING THAT'S
WORTH IT, LOVE.

IT'LL BE A LONG OLD ROAD TO
GET ME THERE. AND TO GET ME
ON IT I HAVE TO GET YOU OUT OF
MY HEAD, AND TO DO THAT I HAVE
TO DO THIS THING I HAVEN'T
WORKED OUT. AND SO ON.

BUT TO USE WHAT YOU TRIED TO DO LIKE I HAVE--THAT SAYS ALL THERE IS TO SAY ABOUT ME.



ALL
RIGHT,
MATE?

NAAAH--!



DUDE,
YOU SCARED
THE SHIT OUT
ME, I THOUGHT
YOU'D BE HERE
ALREADY...!

I WAS.

WHAT'RE
YOU WORRIED
ABOUT, ANYWAY,
YOU CAN PUNCH
THROUGH HALF AN
INCH OF SHEET
STEEL...



I DUNNO,
IT'S JUST--STAY
OUT OF THE PARK
AFTER DARK, YOU
KNOW? IT KIND OF
PUTS YOU ON
EDGE.

YEAH, SOME
DIRTY LITTLE SOD
MIGHT TRY TO
SUCK YER MIGHTY
HAMMER.

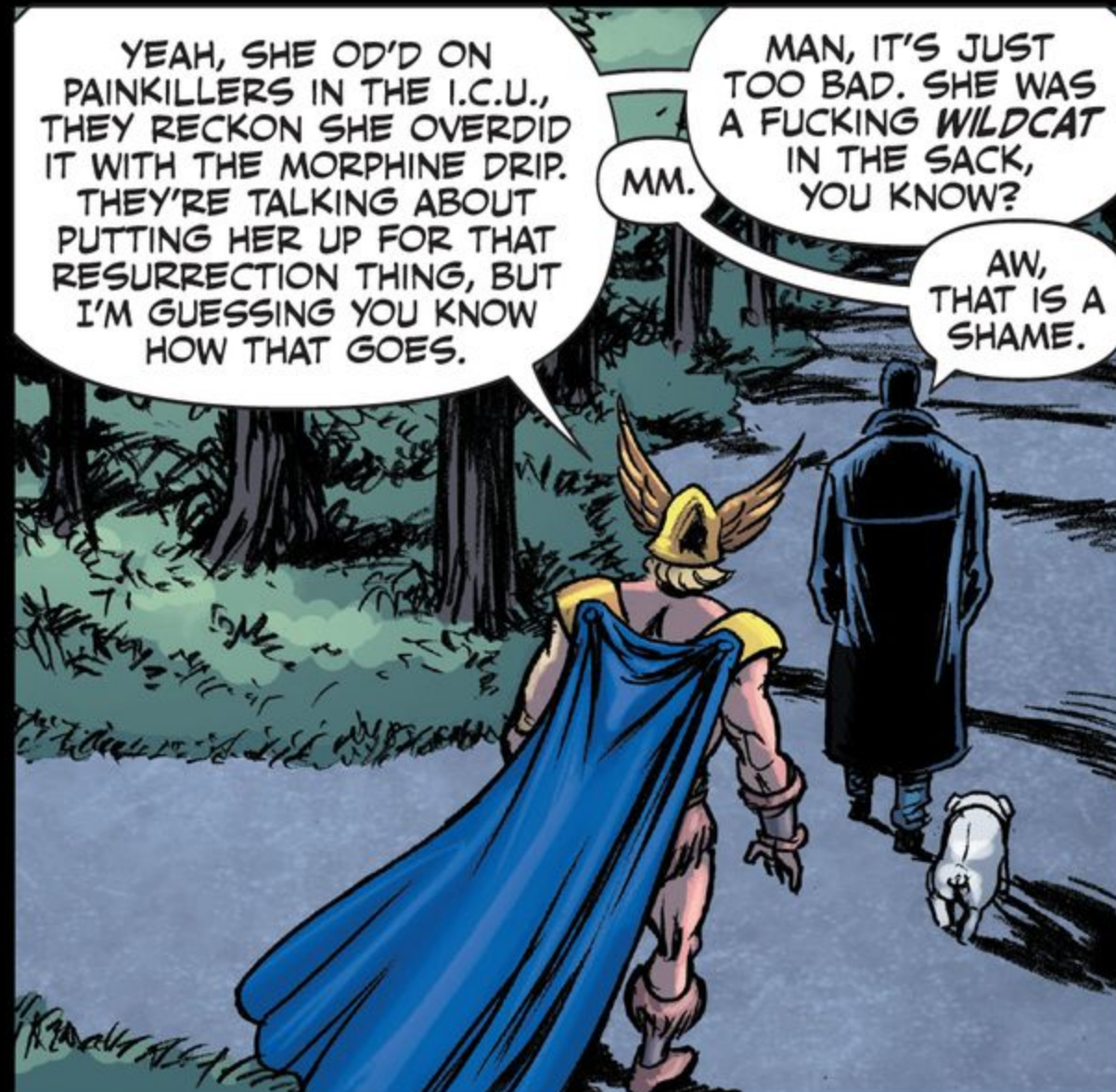
SO WHAT'S
OCCURIN'?



UH, WELL,
NOT MUCH. I MEAN
I'M KEEPING AN
EAR TO THE GROUND
LIKE YOU SAID, BUT
THERE HASN'T BEEN
SHIT ABOUT THE
SKORCHERS SINCE
THE LAST TIME WE
TALKED.

OH, ONE
THING THAT
WAS KIND OF
A BUMMER:
SKANDIA
DIED.

YEAH?

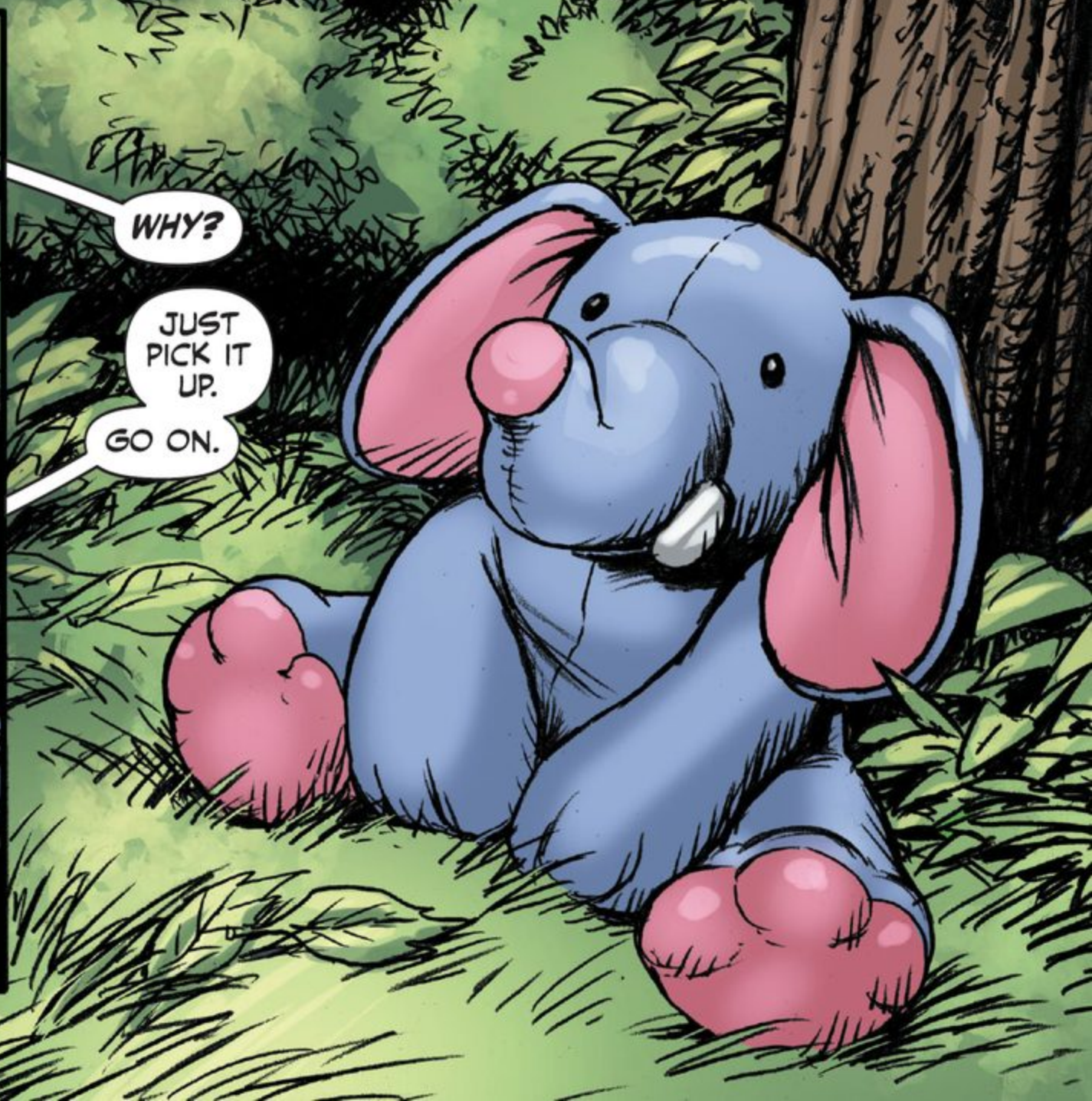


YEAH, SHE OD'D ON
PAINKILLERS IN THE I.C.U.,
THEY RECKON SHE OVERDID
IT WITH THE MORPHINE DRIP.
THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT
PUTTING HER UP FOR THAT
RESURRECTION THING, BUT
I'M GUESSING YOU KNOW
HOW THAT GOES.

MM.

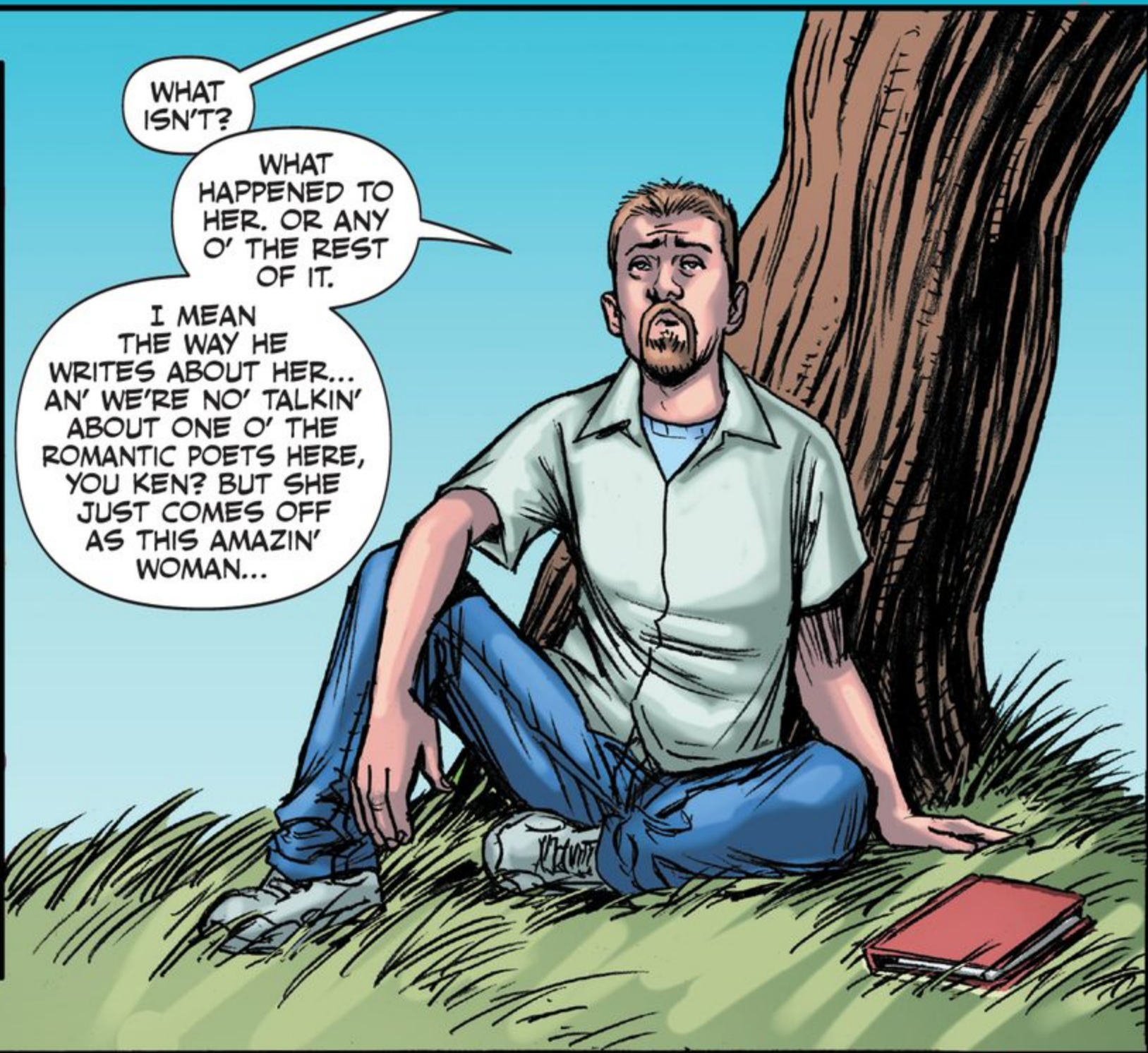
MAN, IT'S JUST
TOO BAD. SHE WAS
A FUCKING *WILDCAT*
IN THE SACK,
YOU KNOW?

AW,
THAT IS A
SHAME.





IT'S
JUST NO'
FAIR.



WHAT
ISN'T?

WHAT
HAPPENED TO
HER. OR ANY
O' THE REST
OF IT.

I MEAN
THE WAY HE
WRITES ABOUT HER...
AN' WE'RE NO' TALKIN'
ABOUT ONE O' THE
ROMANTIC POETS HERE,
YOU KEN? BUT SHE
JUST COMES OFF
AS THIS AMAZIN'
WOMAN...



IT'S NO' FAIR
THAT SOMEONE
LIKE THAT GETS
FORGOTTEN.

YOU WANT
THERE TO BE SOME
OTHER WORLD OR
WHATEVER, WHERE
THE TWO O' THEM GOT
TO BE TOGETHER AN'
NONE O' THIS AWFUL
SHITE EVER
HAPPENED...

WELL,
THERE
ISN'T.



ANYMORE THAN
HE'S BEATING THE SHIT
OUT OF THE DEVIL, OR IT
ALL ENDED IN GLEAMING
ANGELIC LIGHT WITH
HER WELCOMING HIM TO
ETERNAL PEACE. OR
SOME OTHER CRAP OUT
OF A MOVIE.

THAT
WOULD BE AFTER
YOU KILLED HIM,
HUGHIE.



I KEN
THAT.

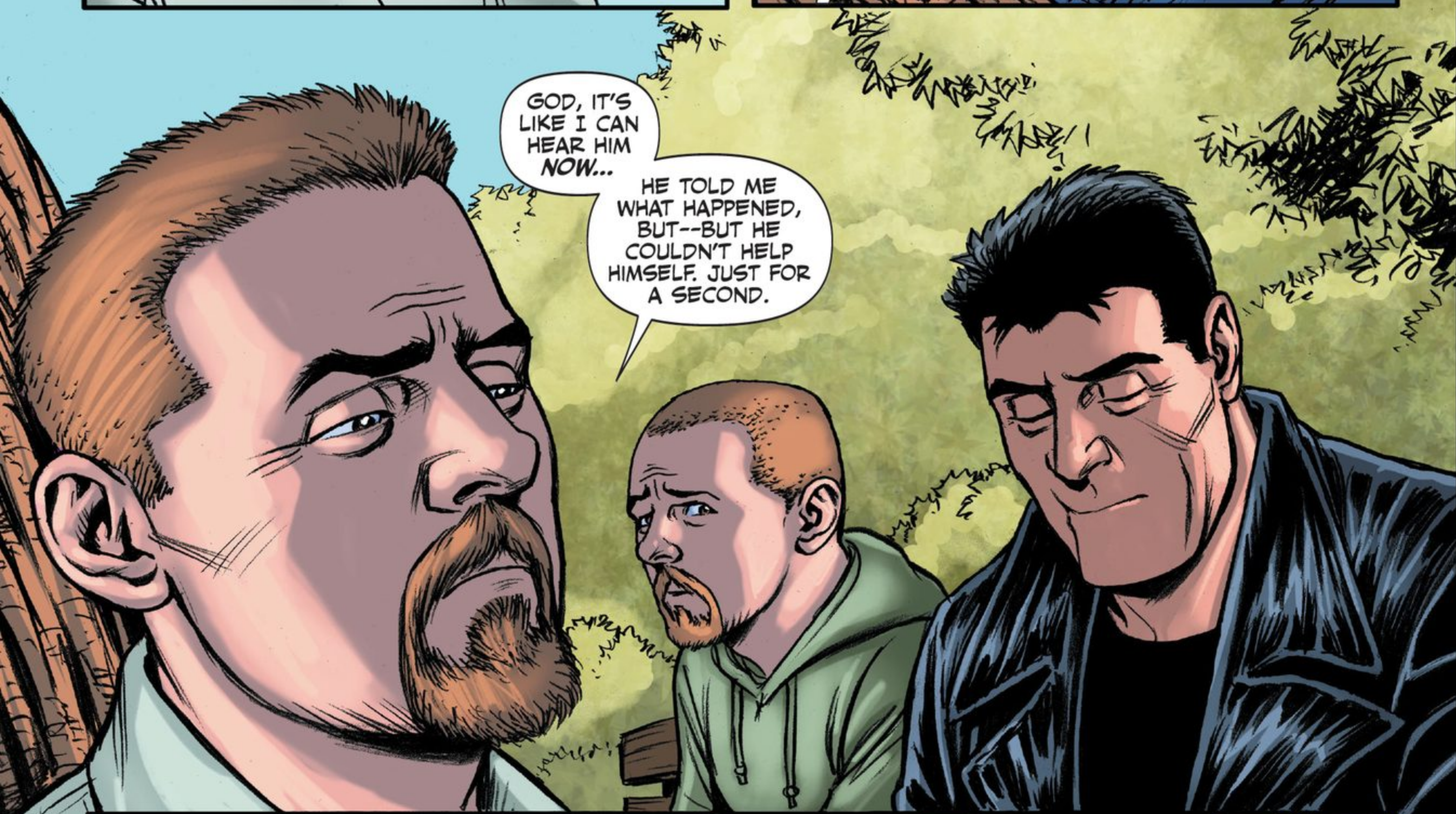
THERE'S
JUST WHAT
THERE IS AND
WHAT WE'VE
GOT.

AYE.



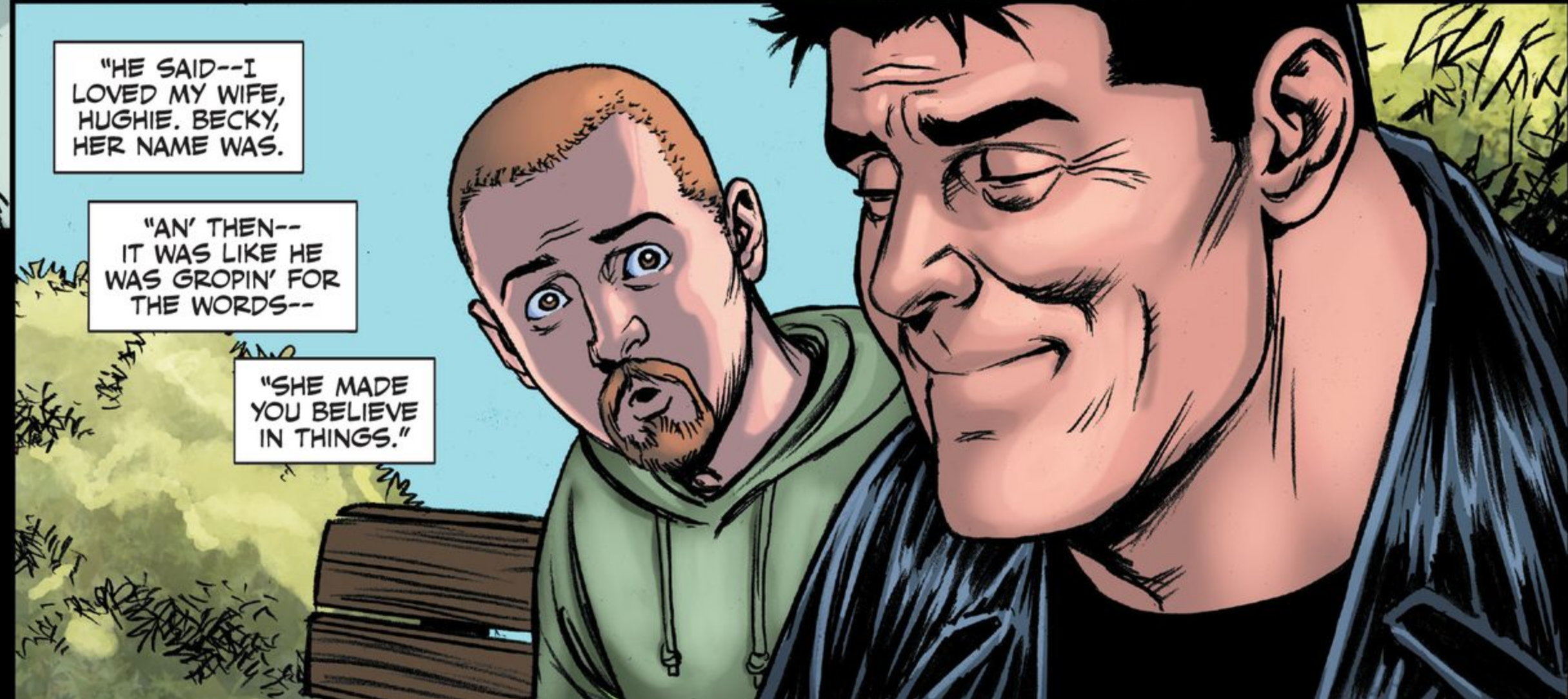
BUT HE'S
TALKIN' ABOUT
DOIN' THIS AWFUL
THING TO GET RID
OF HER, SO HE
CAN...BUT...

I KNEW
HIM, ANNIE.
I REMEMBER
HOW HE TALKED
ABOUT HER.



GOD, IT'S
LIKE I CAN
HEAR HIM
NOW...

HE TOLD ME
WHAT HAPPENED,
BUT--BUT HE
COULDN'T HELP
HIMSELF. JUST FOR
A SECOND.



"HE SAID--I
LOVED MY WIFE,
HUGHIE. BECKY,
HER NAME WAS.

"AN' THEN--
IT WAS LIKE HE
WAS GROPIN' FOR
THE WORDS--

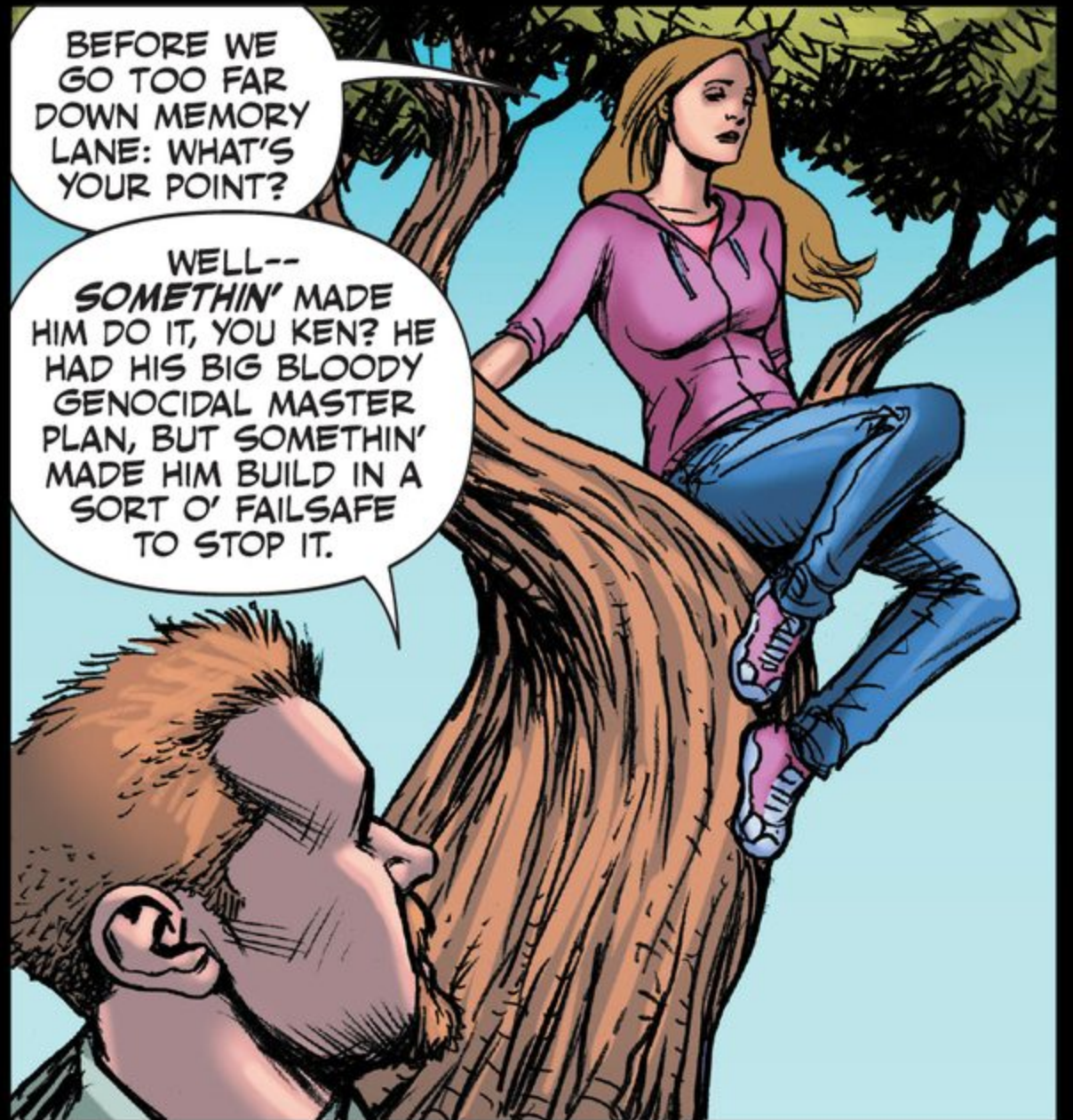
"SHE MADE
YOU BELIEVE
IN THINGS."



AN' THE NEXT SECOND HE WAS BACK TO NORMAL.

AN' THEN ON TOWARDS THE END-- IT WAS WHEN WE WERE OUTSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE AN' AW' THE BASTARDS WERE DEAD, AN' I SAW HIM ACTUALLY START TO--

OKAY, HANG ON.



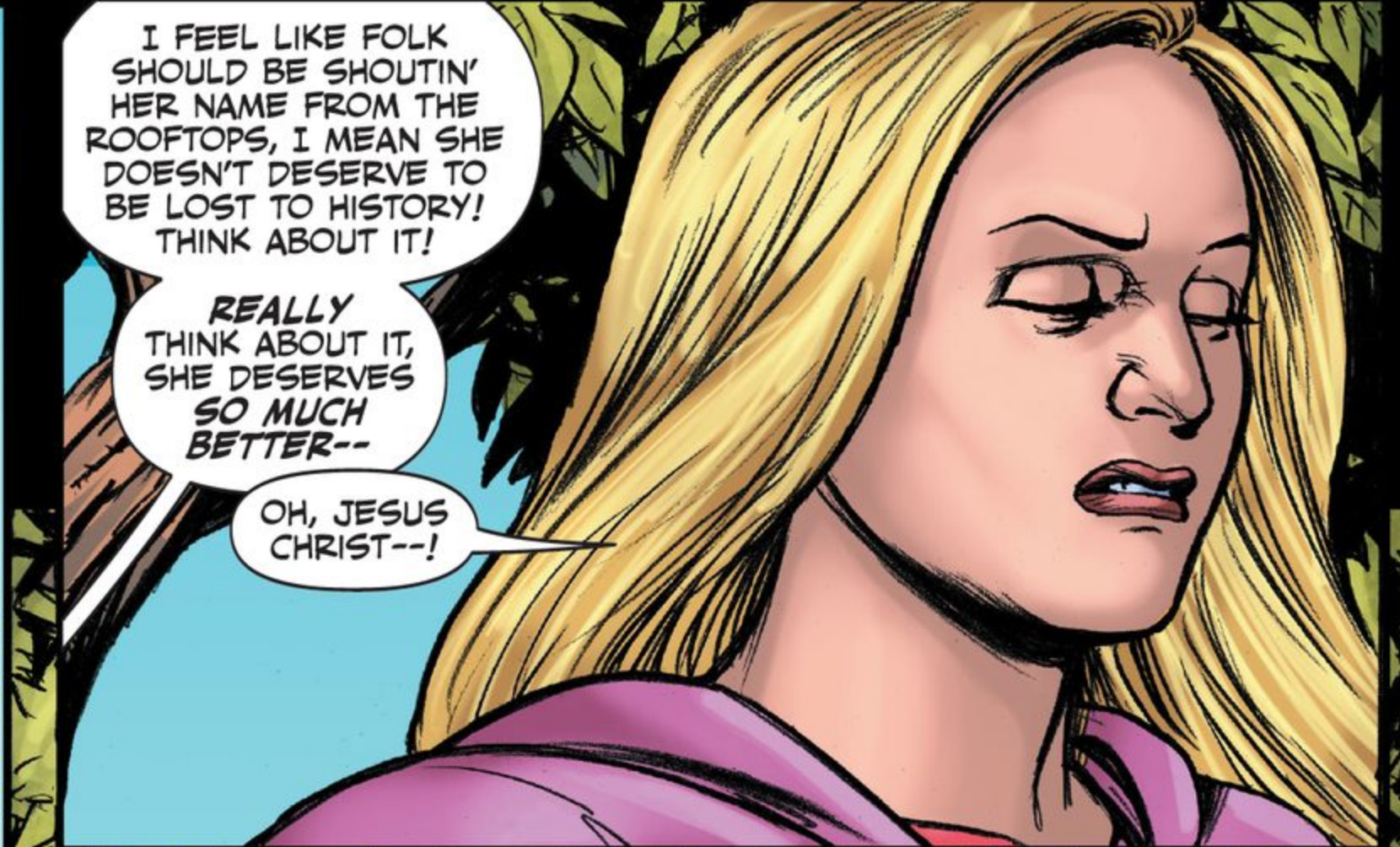
BEFORE WE GO TOO FAR DOWN MEMORY LANE: WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

WELL-- **SOMETHIN'** MADE HIM DO IT, YOU KEN? HE HAD HIS BIG BLOODY GENOCIDAL MASTER PLAN, BUT SOMETHIN' MADE HIM BUILD IN A SORT O' FAILSAFE TO STOP IT.



THE FAILSAFE BEING YOU.

HE TALKED ABOUT HAVIN' A WEE BROTHER, 'CAUSE IT WAS HIS OWN BROTHER STOPPED HIM WRECKIN' THINGS WHEN THEY WERE KIDS. BUT WHY WOULD HE EVEN **WANT** TO STOP HIMSELF?



I FEEL LIKE FOLK SHOULD BE SHOUTIN' HER NAME FROM THE ROOFTOPS, I MEAN SHE DOESN'T DESERVE TO BE LOST TO HISTORY! THINK ABOUT IT!

REALLY THINK ABOUT IT, SHE DESERVES **SO MUCH BETTER--**

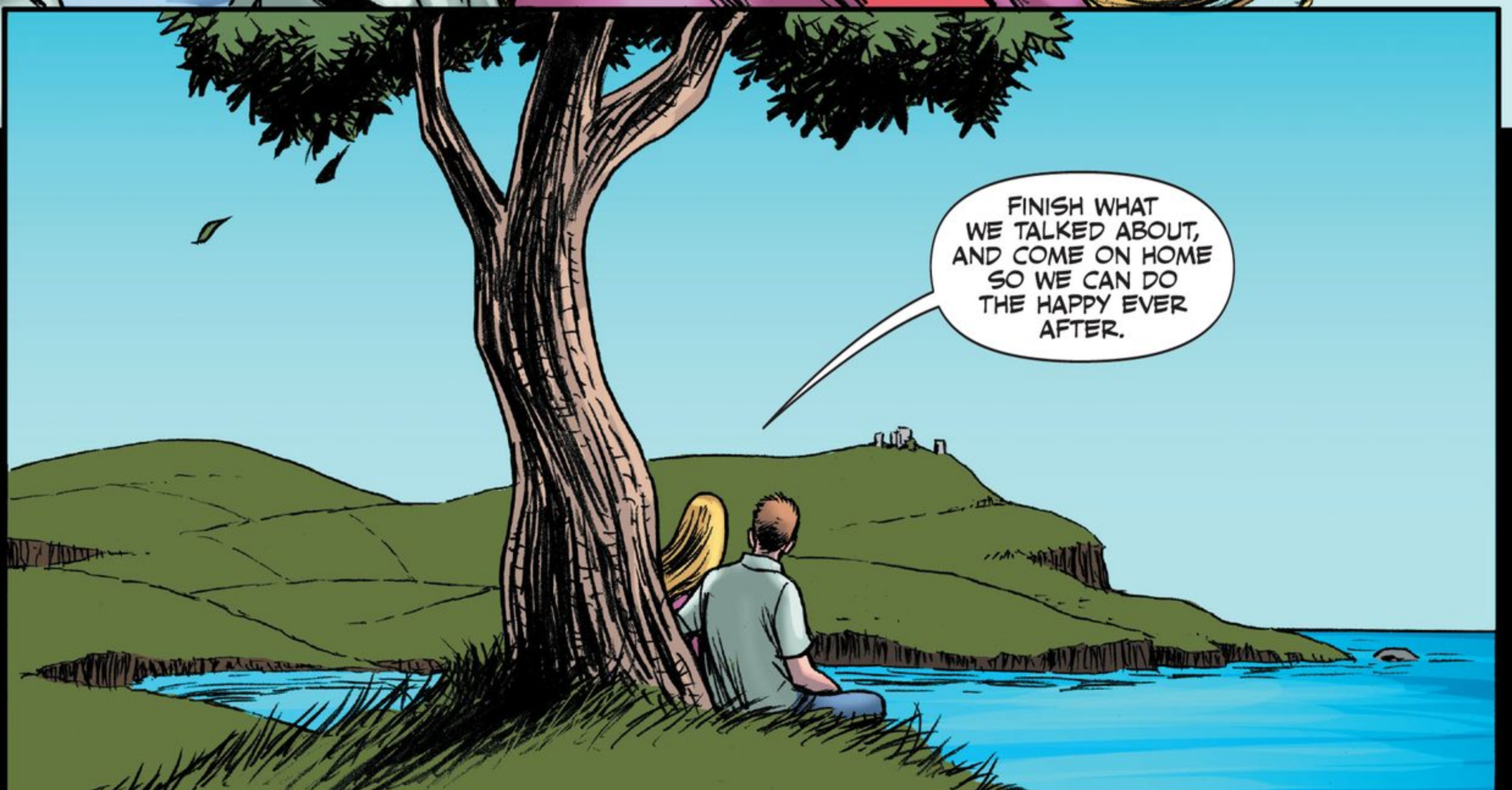
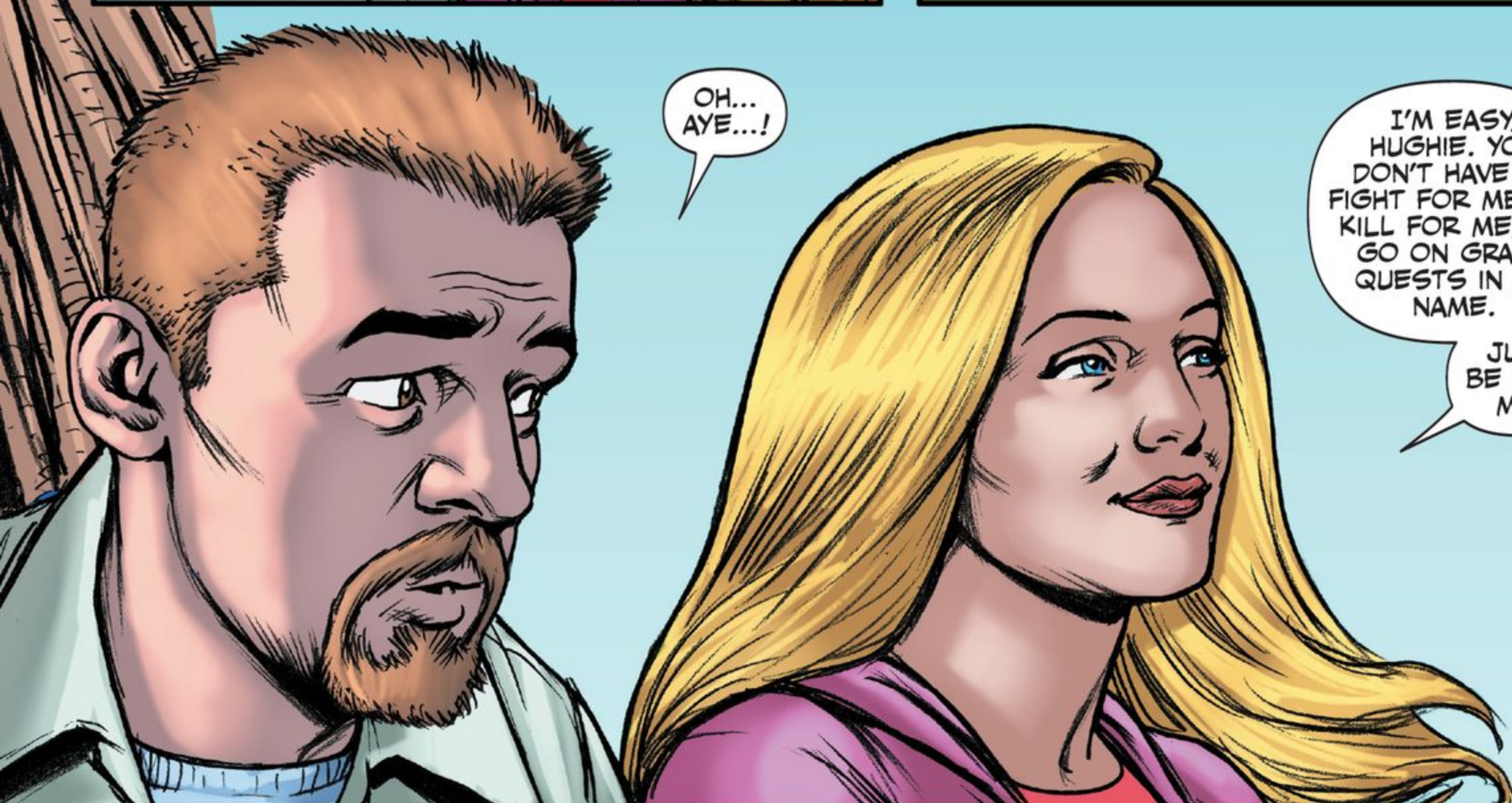
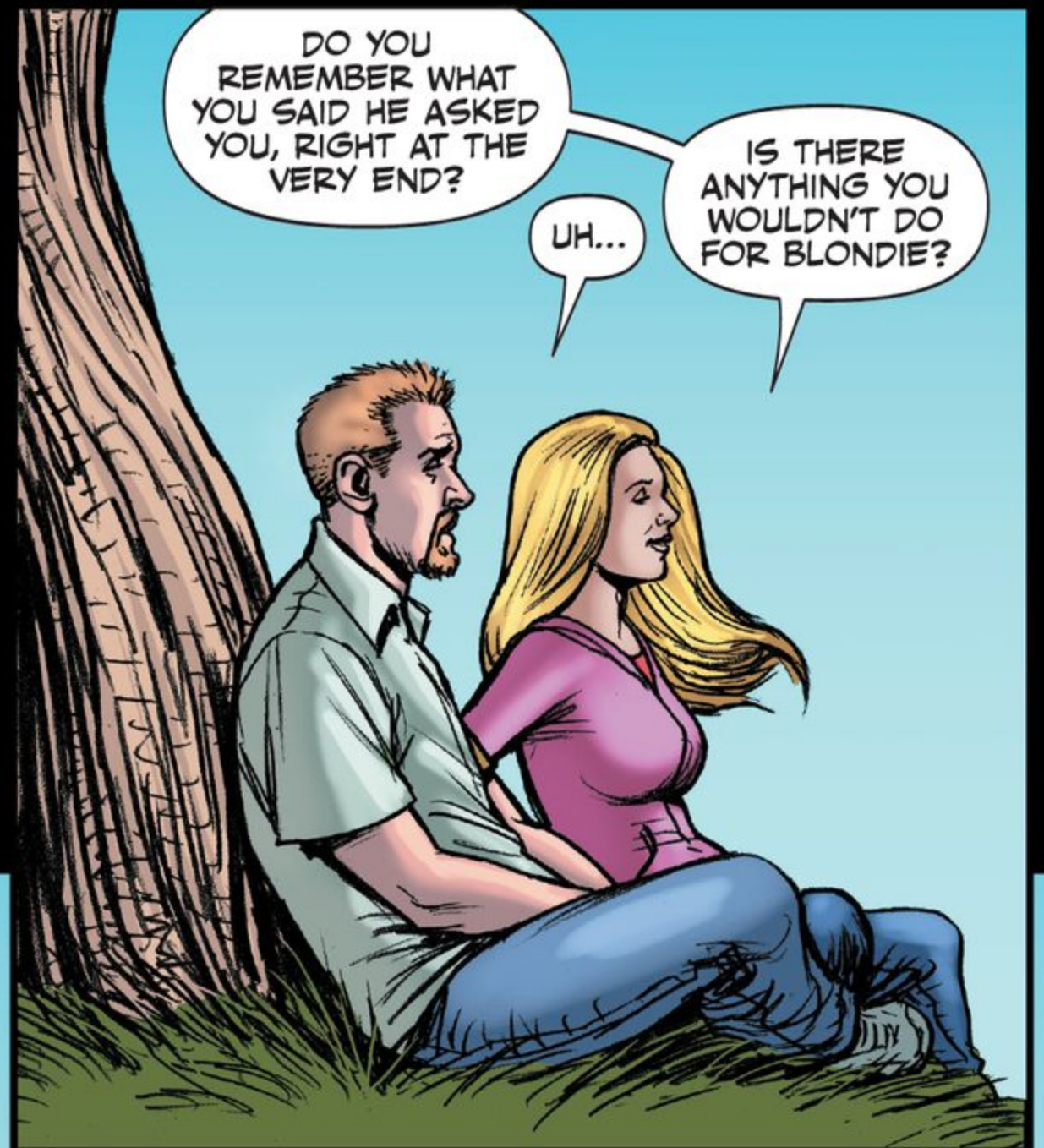
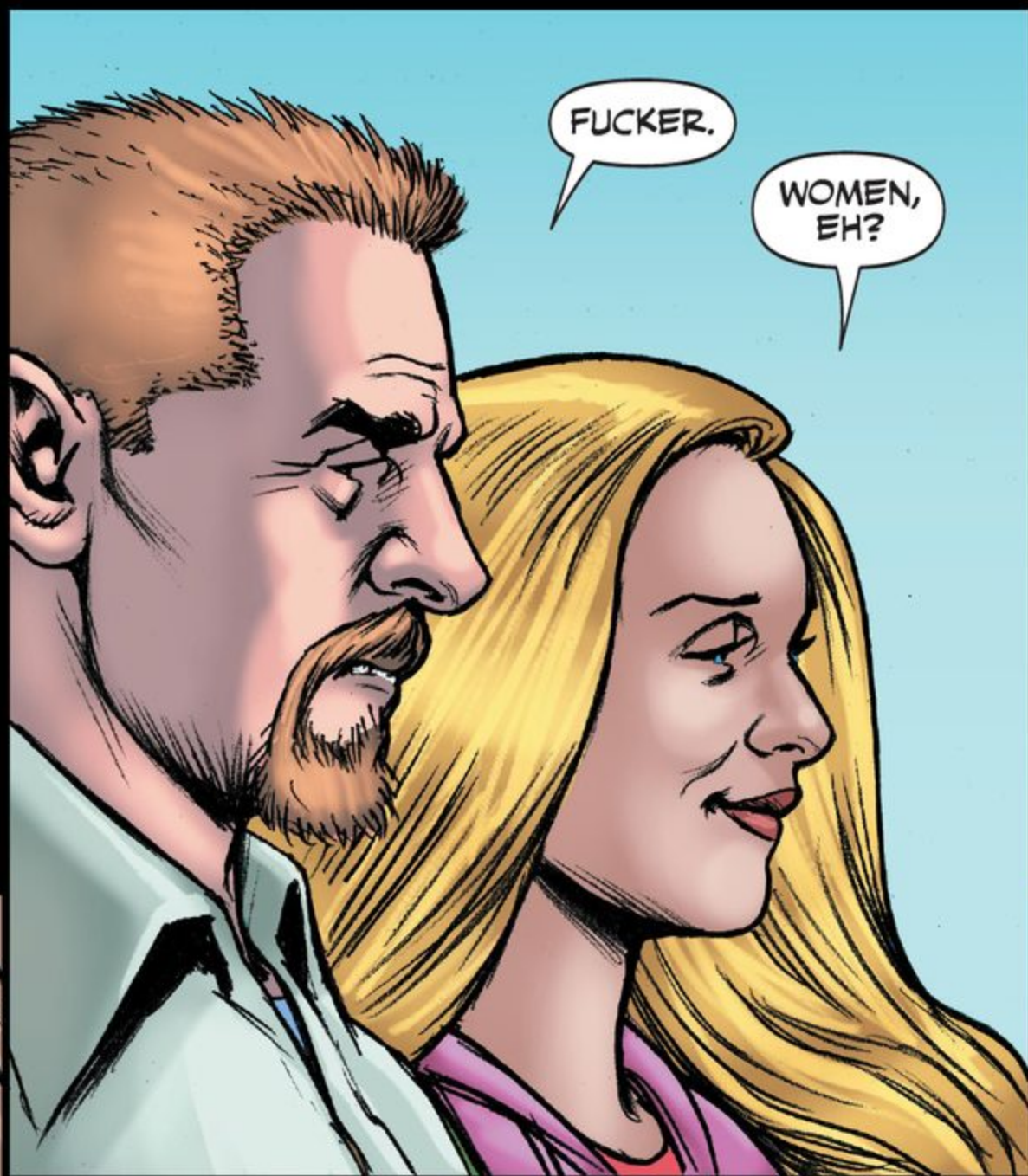
OH, JESUS CHRIST--!



EH?

THERE'S NO **WHAT BECKY DESERVES**, ANYMORE THAN THERE'S **WHAT BECKY WOULD HAVE WANTED...!**

WHAT BECKY **DESERVED**, HUGHIE, WAS NOT TO BE RAPED BY THAT FUCKING MONSTER IN THE FIRST PLACE! NOT TO BE KILLED BY ITS DISGUSTING SPAWN, SO SHE COULD LIVE OUT HER LIFE WITH THE MAN SHE LOVED!



...POINT IS
THAT WE DON'T HAVE
TO FOLLOW THE NORMAL
SUPERHUMAN DEVELOPMENT
MODEL, WHICH IS REALLY
JUST THE SAME SIX OR
SEVEN INDIVIDUALS WITH THEIR
COSTUMES COLORED IN
DIFFERENTLY EACH TIME--
AD INFINITUM...



WE
CAN TAKE IDEAS
FROM WHEREVER
WE LIKE.

WE CAN
GET CREATIVE,
WE CAN HAVE
FUN...

WHO
SHOT
THIS?

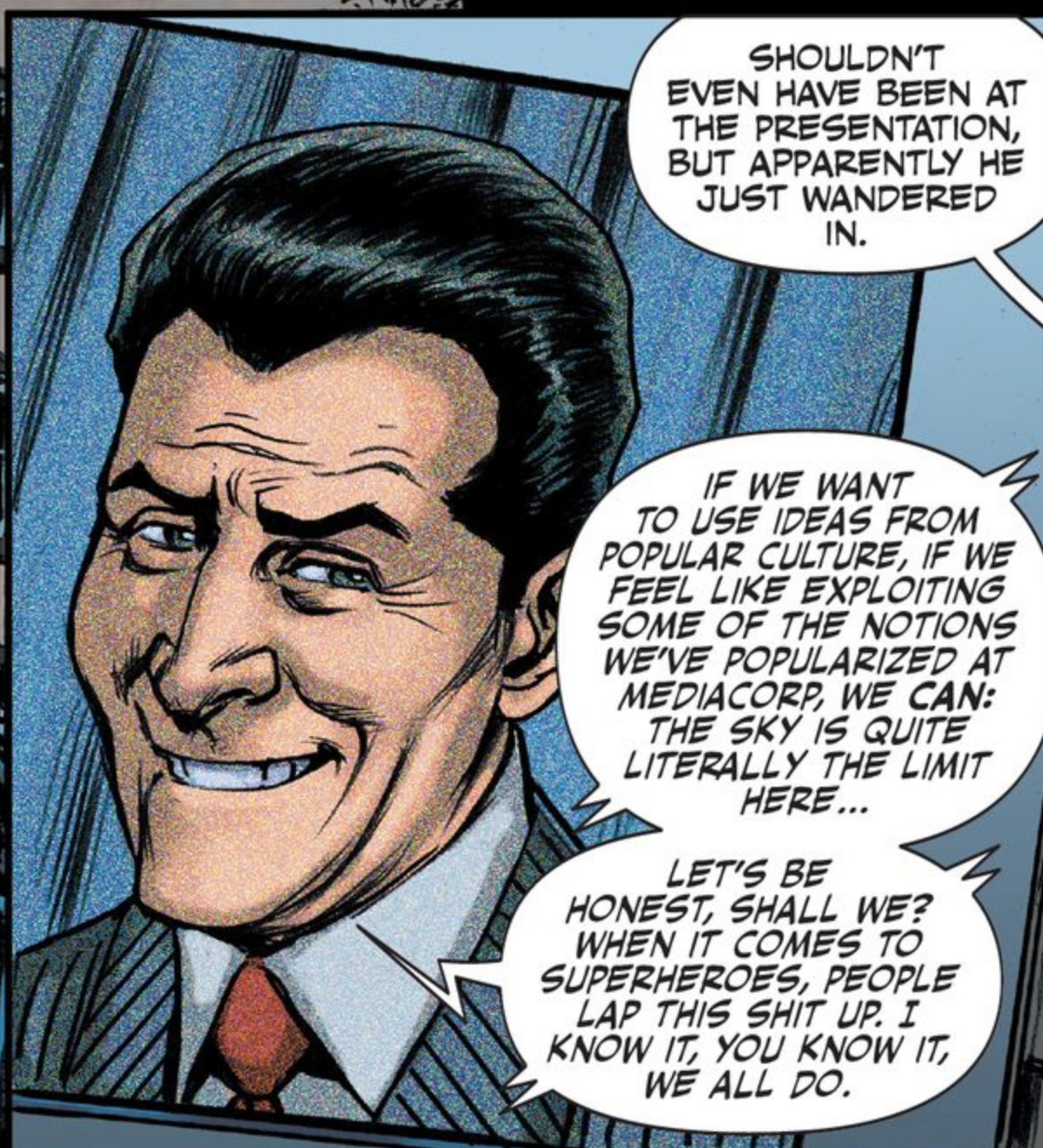
ONE OF
THE LEGEND'S
CONTACTS OVER
AT VICTORY.



SHOULDN'T
EVEN HAVE BEEN AT
THE PRESENTATION,
BUT APPARENTLY HE
JUST WANDERED
IN.

IF WE WANT
TO USE IDEAS FROM
POPULAR CULTURE, IF WE
FEEL LIKE EXPLOITING
SOME OF THE NOTIONS
WE'VE POPULARIZED AT
MEDIACORP, WE CAN:
THE SKY IS QUITE
LITERALLY THE LIMIT
HERE...

LET'S BE
HONEST, SHALL WE?
WHEN IT COMES TO
SUPERHEROES, PEOPLE
LAP THIS SHIT UP. I
KNOW IT, YOU KNOW IT,
WE ALL DO.



THEY ARE
GOING TO TAKE
ANYTHING WE PUT
IN FRONT OF
THEM...

HE'S SPEAKING
AT AN OFFICIAL
VOUGHT-AMERICAN
FUNCTION.

THAT'S
WHAT
MATTERS.

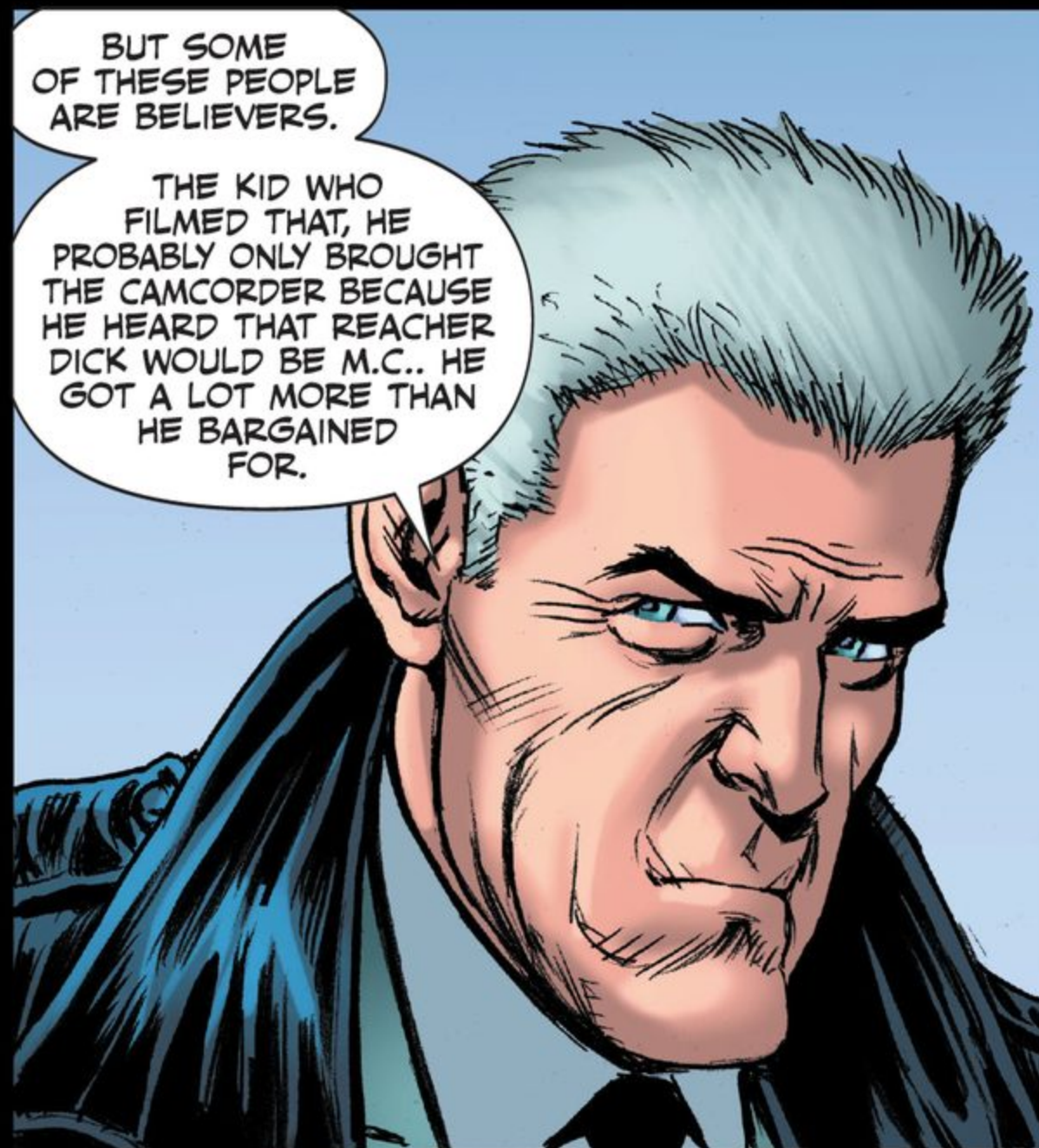
HE SOUNDS
LIKE HE'S HAD
A COUPLE O'
DRINKS.





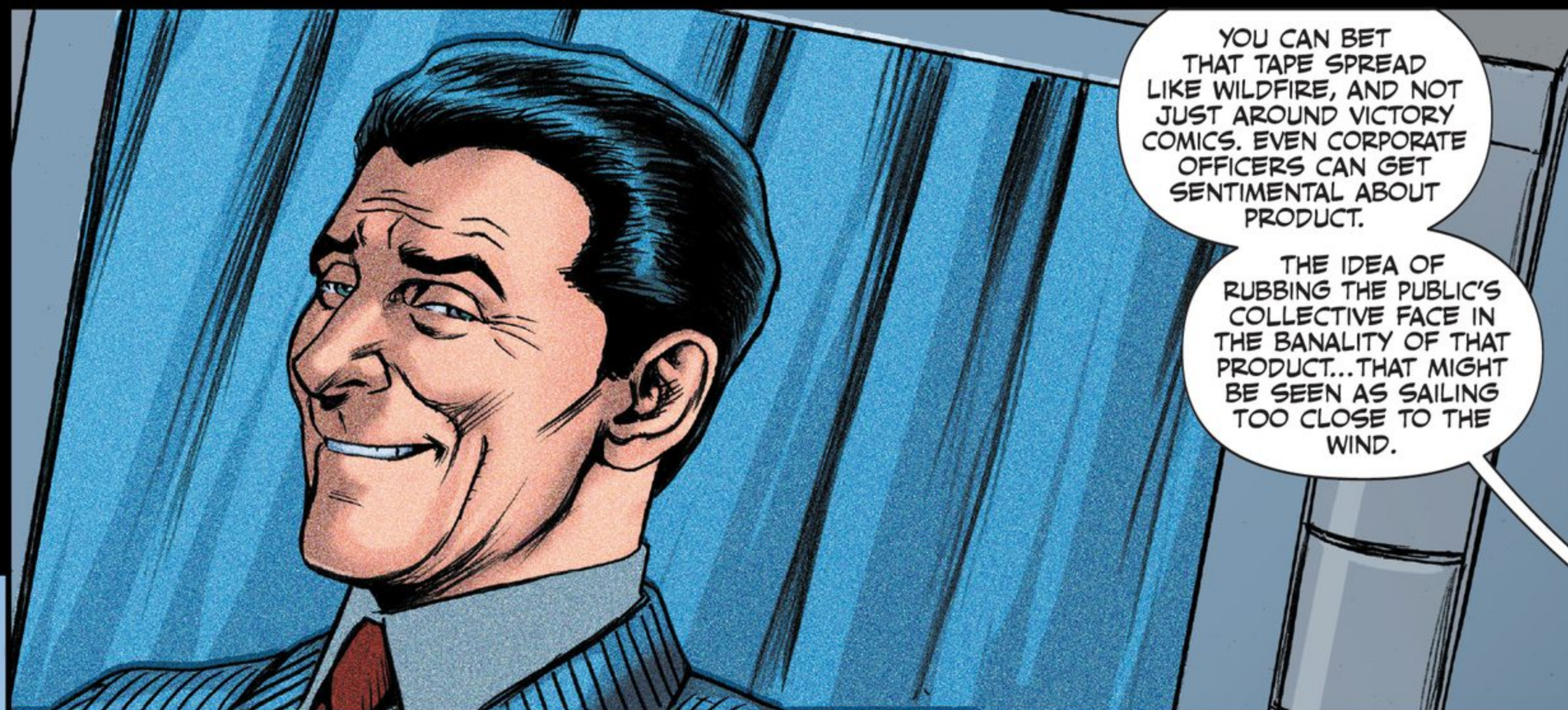
TELLIN' THE TRUTH TO ALL THE WRONG PEOPLE, YOU MEAN.

WELL, DESCRIBING SUPES AS SHIT, THAT MEANS NOTHING TO YOU AND ME.



BUT SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE BELIEVERS.

THE KID WHO FILMED THAT, HE PROBABLY ONLY BROUGHT THE CAMCORDER BECAUSE HE HEARD THAT REACHER DICK WOULD BE M.C.. HE GOT A LOT MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR.



YOU CAN BET THAT TAPE SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE, AND NOT JUST AROUND VICTORY COMICS. EVEN CORPORATE OFFICERS CAN GET SENTIMENTAL ABOUT PRODUCT.

THE IDEA OF RUBBING THE PUBLIC'S COLLECTIVE FACE IN THE BANALITY OF THAT PRODUCT...THAT MIGHT BE SEEN AS SAILING TOO CLOSE TO THE WIND.



IF YOU'RE GONNA SELL PEOPLE A LOADA BOLLOCKS, IT HELPS IF YOU DON'T CALL IT THAT.

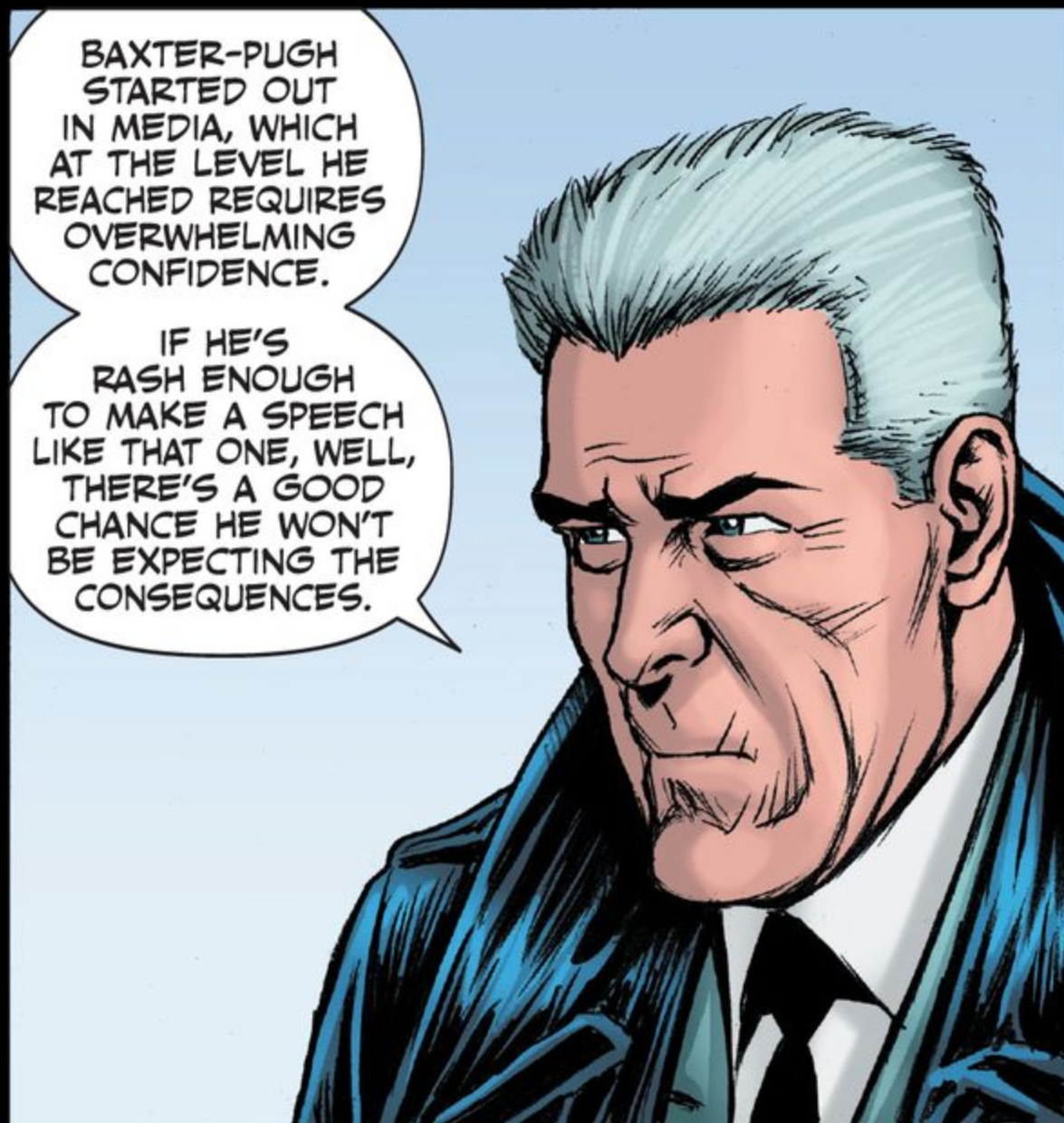
MM.

PISSED ON HIS CHIPS WITH JUST ABOUT EVERYONE, AIN'T HE?



THE RANK AND FILE WITH THIS-- THE BOARD WITH GRAND SAVANNA. YES.

SO WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?



BAXTER-PUGH STARTED OUT IN MEDIA, WHICH AT THE LEVEL HE REACHED REQUIRES OVERWHELMING CONFIDENCE.

IF HE'S RASH ENOUGH TO MAKE A SPEECH LIKE THAT ONE, WELL, THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE HE WON'T BE EXPECTING THE CONSEQUENCES.



THAT WHAT LANGLEY THINK, IS IT?

I TOLD YOU I WAS GOING TO TALK TO THEM...

THEY USUALLY LEAVE US TO GET ON WITH IT.

WHICH THEY WILL HERE.



THIS IS SORTA LIKE THE ARABS AN' THE ISRAELIS TO THEM, INNIT? SO LONG AS IT JUST PLODS ALONG AN' NO ONE EVER WINS.

YES, I SUPPOSE IT IS.



THE PHRASE I'VE HEARD USED IS, AH...A LOW INTENSITY ENGAGEMENT WITH ONGOING BUT MINIMAL LIKELIHOOD OF BLOWBACK...

OH, WELL AS LONG AS YOU'VE GOT A NAME FOR IT, EH?

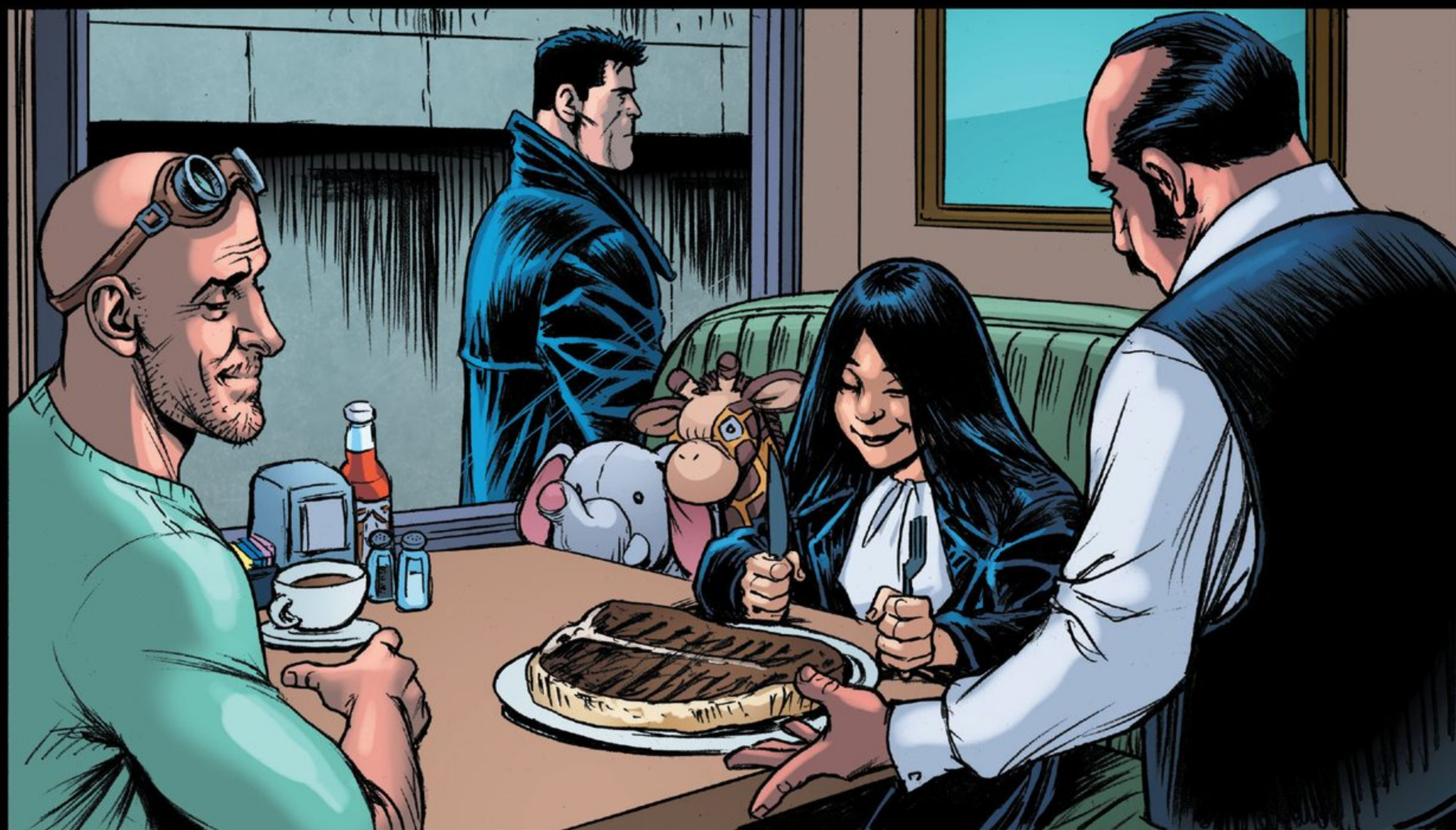


'COS THEN YOU CAN PRETEND YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT. AN' THEN YOU CAN DO SOMETHIN'.



EVEN IF IT'S THE WRONG THING, 'COS REALLY YOU KNOW FUCK ALL.







NO BIG SURPRISE THERE,
I KNOW. WRITING'S BEYOND A
BERK LIKE ME, THERE'S ALL
SORTS OF TRICKS TO IT I JUST
CAN'T GET MY HEAD ROUND.



BUT EVEN IF I WAS
GOOD AT IT, I DON'T
THINK THE WORDS
FOR YOU EXIST.



I STOOD THERE AFTER
I DONE WHAT I DONE
AND THOUGHT--TOO
LATE NOW, ANYWAY.

IT'S OVER
AND DONE
WITH.



SHE'S GONE.

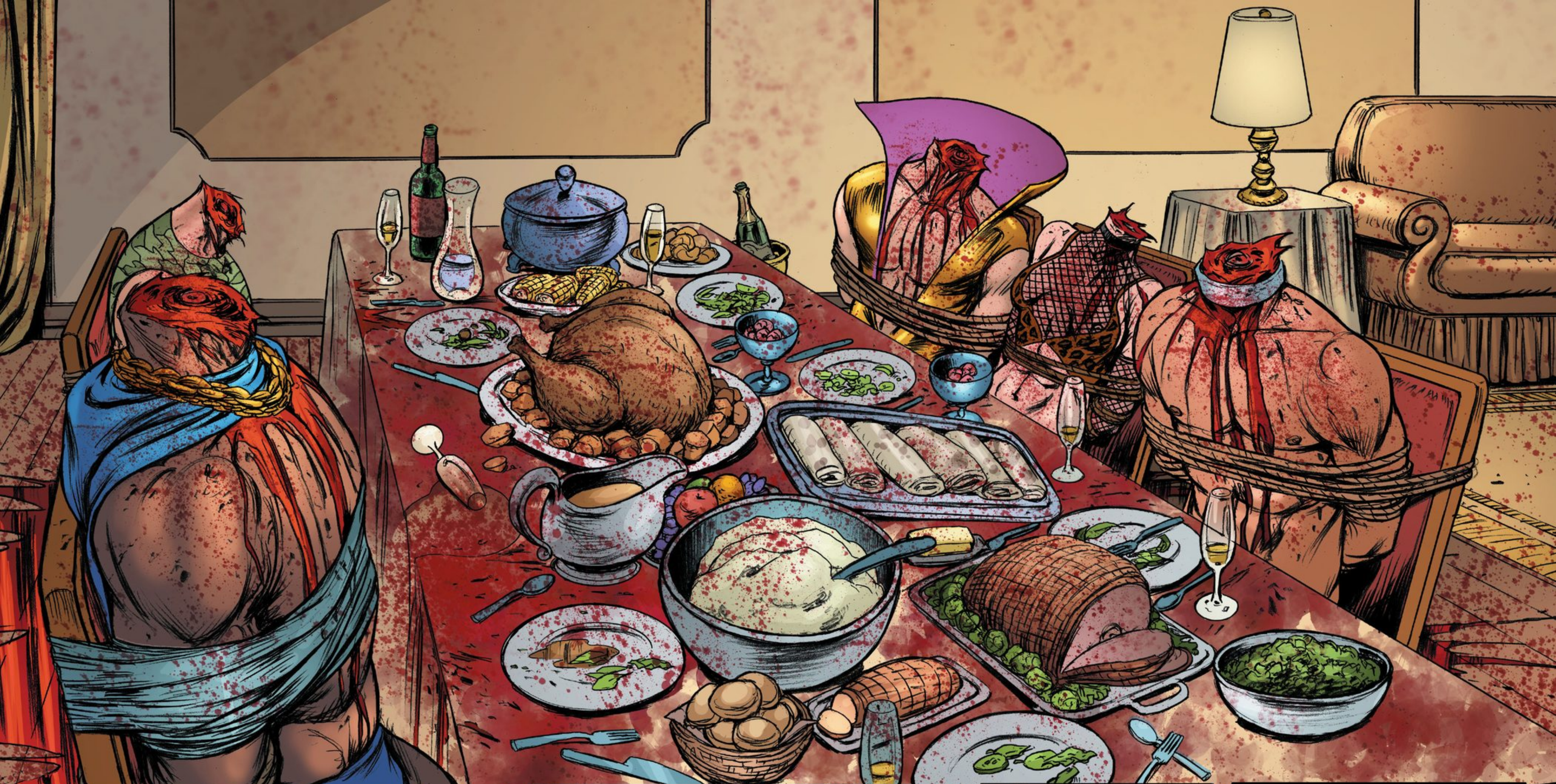


WHAT?
WHAT'S--

THE
FOOD.

IT'S
IN THE FOOD,
DON'T ANYONE
TOUCH--





ALL I CAN SAY IS
GOODBYE, LOVE.

BILLY



THE END

DAN ABNETT AND JONATHAN LAU ON SONJA'S SUPERHERO TURN

Dan, last month we unveiled *VAMPIRELLA: THE DARK POWERS*, and now here we have the companion title starring *RED SONJA*. How are you crafting these two titles to play off of each other as readers follow both?

Abnett: Each is its own story. Sonja's series shows her, like Vampirella, recruited by the Project and learning to work with the organization. They both hit bumps along the way because neither one of them is a good fit for traditional superheroics. So the stories are running in parallel. However, as they play out, we will see how they meet and interconnect in interesting and explosive ways.

With both characters trying out for *The Project* in a classic capes and tights superheroic role, how do you see them differing in fulfilling that? How does *Red Sonja* fit the bill?

Abnett: It doesn't really suit either of them, but the stories explain why it's happening. It's a deliberate genre clash, played out logically and realistically (and for maximum fun). With Vampirella, we joined her when she was already on board as a member. Sonja's tale is rather different.

This series opens not too dissimilar from a traditional *Red Sonja* sword and sandals story. What can longtime fans of the *She-Devil With a Sword* expect from their favorite Hyborian heroine in this series?

Abnett: It starts very much like a classic Hyborian adventure and then shows the clash between genres as it happens. It's everything you'd want and expect from a Red Sonja tale, and then it takes a violent twist. It's immense fun, and I think fans of both sword and sorcery, and superheroes, will get a big kick out of it.

Lau: I'm very much in the same boat with the readers with regards to the story. I just want to ramp up the action in every issue I get and that's what will be different - Hyborian action from yours truly. Although this time around, I'm challenged to maintain the strict rule of going old school comics paneling and design. Notice there is no floating or overlapping images, no open or fancy panels, even Sonja's hair is back instead of my usual lion's mane look.

You're working with artist Jonathan Lau on this series, who *Dynamite* fans know and love. What does he bring to the table with you as a collaborator and how's it been seeing his pages roll in?

Abnett: His art's incredible - so vivid and detailed, and so dynamic. He's a great artist for this - he captures Sonja's world, and the feel of her adventures, perfectly, but he's also got plenty more in the tank

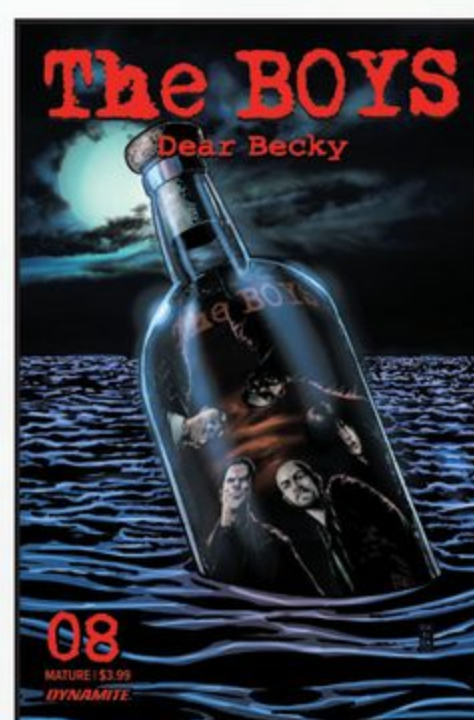
to blow it open with everything else. The superhero stuff is awesome too. Ever wanted to see what a sword would do to an over-confident superhero..?

Jonathan, you've drawn nearly every major *Dynamite* character. You're just coming off of *Red Sonja: Age of Chaos*, which also dealt with a large cast and lots of action. Now you're drawing *ALL* the characters. Which ones are you most excited to portray in this series? And are you calling back to any of your previous work here?

Lau: I've dipped my hands into the Project Superpowers characters way back. I'm simply excited to do some capes and spandex stuff here again because it's as close as I could get to draw Supes or Bats. Personally, Black Terror would be nostalgic to draw or anyone else with a cape at the least!

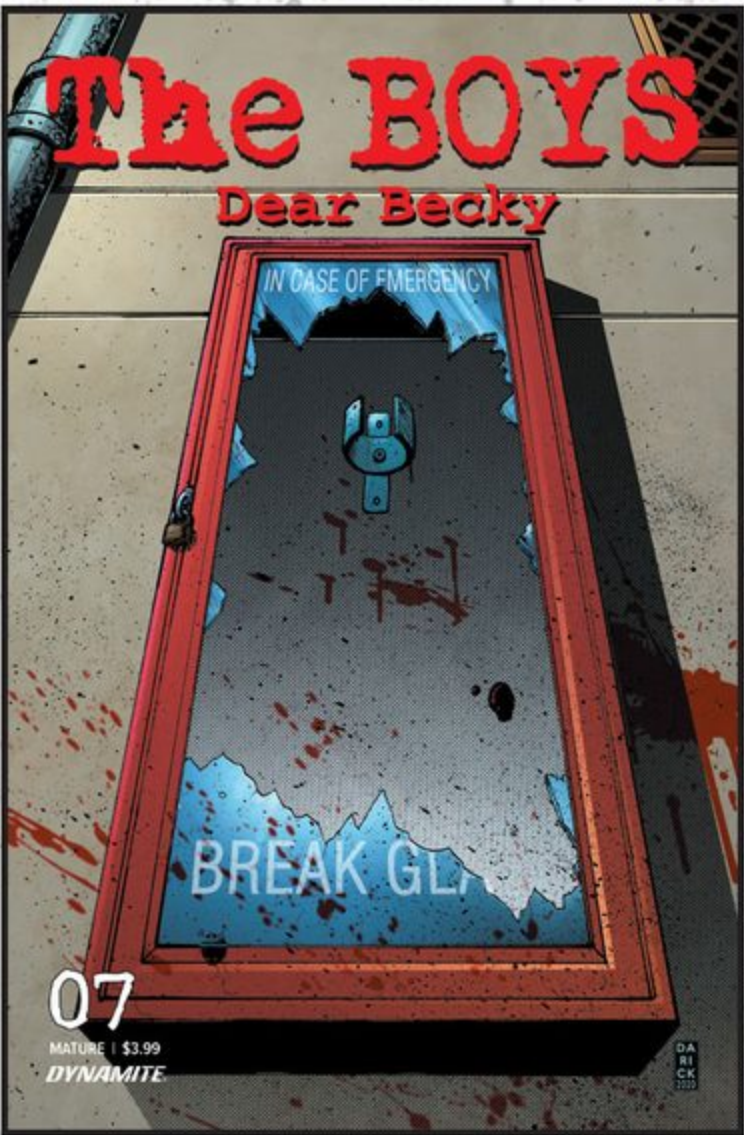
I hear whispers that these two series are leading to something even bigger... Without getting too spoilery, what can *Dynamite* readers look forward to?

Abnett: Something big indeed. When we first discussed this idea, it seemed like it wouldn't work. Take two iconic characters, each with their own very particular style and genre, and mix them up... and then pour in a huge measure of another genre, the superhero team, the costumed hero. The fun was making it work, and I think it really does. These three ingredients, which shouldn't fit together on the same page, fit together perfectly when you set up the right context. Sonja and Vampi are both, reluctantly, joining a pan-galactic, hyper-advanced superhero organization that protects entire worlds... you KNOW that's not going to go smoothly. To me the trick was not to make anybody look stupid: not Vampirella, not Red Sonja, but not the Project superheroes either. They're not the patsies here, they're not the idiots caught in the crossfire. You know, now that these projects are both announced, that Sonja and Vampi are going to meet. That's going to be big. But without getting spoilery, that's just the start. Stay tuned... there's something epic coming that you will NOT want to miss!

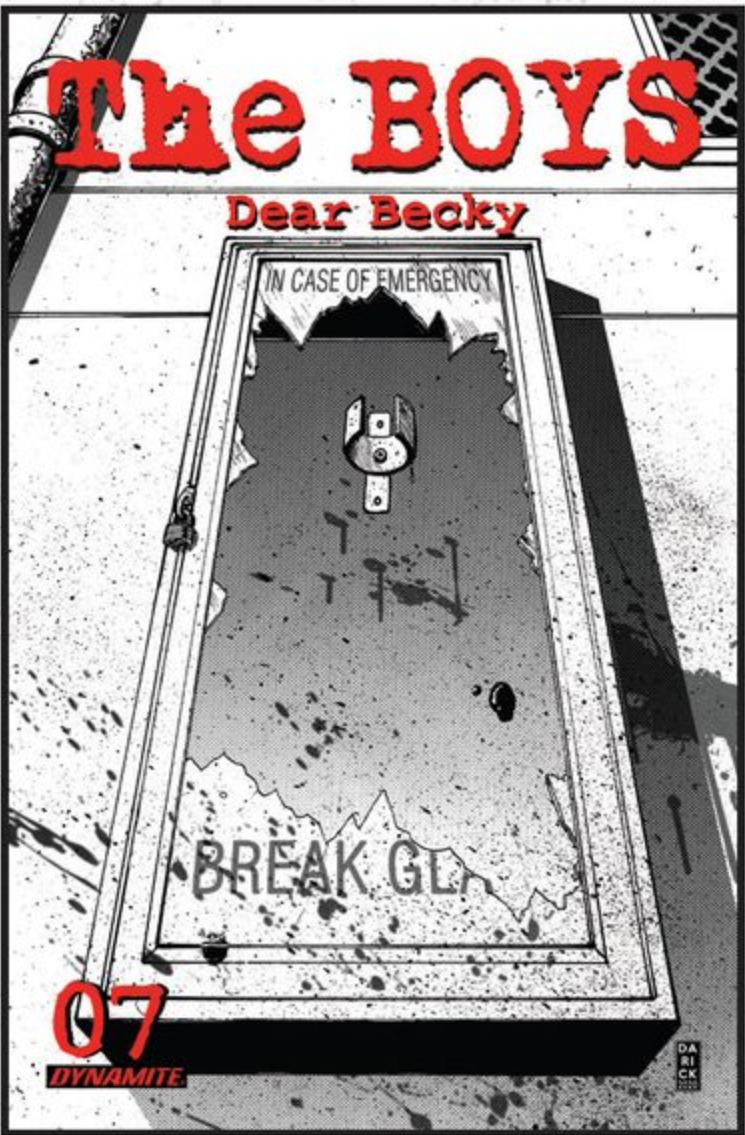


NEXT ISSUE

With the aid of some old familiar faces, Hughie's globetrotting efforts to discover the origin of Becky's diary finally bear fruit- but is he ready to face the shadowy figure behind the conspiracy that almost destroyed him? Old debts are paid and old scores settled, as the last story of *The Boys* comes to its conclusion.



cover A
**DARICK
ROBERTSON**
colors by
TONY AVIÑA



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